

BROADCAST JOURNALISM (SECTION 20268)

County College of Morris
Randolph, NJ
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Course Description

**Please note that the following course description differs from the one offered in the course catalog.*

This course uses an integrated approach to incorporate both critical and practical aspects of broadcast journalism. The impact of broadcast media (particularly television) on journalistic practice and audience reception is explored along with basic production techniques such as script writing, video production, and editing.

Course Objectives

1. To improve media literacy.
2. To instill a critical perspective of television news.
3. To familiarize students with practice of journalism.
4. To familiarize students with video production techniques.

Anticipated Learning Outcomes

1. The ability to demonstrate a proficiency in media literacy through describing the technical and aesthetic considerations related to broadcast journalism.
2. The ability to think critically about the economic and social pressures that shape television news.
3. The ability to demonstrate knowledge of the practice of journalism, including theories of the press and reporting techniques.
4. The ability to write, shoot, and edit a short Interview Package.

Methods of Instruction

1. Lecture: A brief introduction to material that connects readings to class exercises.
2. Audio-Visual Presentations: Short presentations that are focused on a relevant topic and intended to provoke discussion.
3. Class Discussion: Full group discussion of topics related to specific questions, readings, media presentations and/or exam preparation.
4. Group Discussion: Small group discussion of topics related to specific questions, readings, media presentations and/or exam preparation.
5. Workshop Sessions: Production workshops with instruction on script writing, camera operation, lighting, and interviewing.

Required Textbooks

Postman, N. & Powers, S. (2008). *How to Watch TV News*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

White, T. (2005). *Broadcast News Writing, Reporting, and Production* (4th Edition). New York: Focal Press.

Required Media

1. *CBS Evening News with Katie Couric* (CBS)
2. *NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams* (NBC)
3. *ABC World News with Charles Gibson* (ABC)
4. *Campbell Brown: No Bias. No Bull.* (CNN)
5. *Glenn Beck* (Fox News)
6. *Countdown with Keith Olbermann* (MSNBC)
7. *Frontline* (PBS)
8. *20/20* (ABC)
9. *Dateline* (NBC)
10. *48 Hours* (CBS)
11. *60 Minutes* (CBS)

Additional Resources

<http://mattsmediaresearch.com>: This will serve as the official website for this class. The syllabus and other material will be made available through the “Students” hyperlink at the top of the homepage.

Course Requirements

1. *Attendance*: Students are expected to attend all class meetings.
2. *Reading and Participation*: Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the topic described in the course schedule (see Course Calendar and Appendix A).

3. *Quizzes*: Students are expected to demonstrate their knowledge in the form of six short in-class quizzes.
4. *Interview Packages*: Students are expected to plan, write, shoot, and edit a five minute interview package demonstrating their knowledge of theories and techniques learned in class.

Evaluation and Grading

1. *Attendance Policy*: All students are entitled to two unexcused absences from class. Beyond this single absence, 1/3 of a grade will be deducted from the final grade for each additional unexcused absence (e.g. B- reduced to C+). Excused absences are accepted only if accompanied by documentation relating to the nature of the excuse (e.g. auto repair receipt, doctor's note, jury duty notification, etc.).
2. *Lateness*: Roll is taken at the beginning of the class as the attendance sheet is circulated. Students who are late must sign in at the end of class and be marked late. Three late arrivals are equal to one absence.
3. *Participation*: All students are expected to demonstrate informed participation in class discussion and workshop exercises. Discussion participation can include [1] initiation of discussion about an issue related to the topic scheduled for discussion for that class session [2] contribution to an ongoing discussion through informed opinion and/or presentation of evidence. Please note that there exists a distinction between an uninformed opinion and the assertion of a particular theoretical perspective. As opposed to personal opinion that is grounded in individual anecdotal experience, the statement of a perspective implies a coherent paradigm that has application value based on functionality in other circumstances. Put simply, a perspective has demonstrated its validity elsewhere. Workshop participation will be evaluated based on the student's initiative in presenting ideas, asking informed questions, and performing production tasks. Participation will be evaluated based on the number of valid contributions that the student makes throughout the course of the semester. A minimum of 1 contribution is expected each week. Additional contributions will be added as half points to the final grade and deficient contribution points will be subtracted as half points from the final grade. For example, if a student has a final test average of 77%, but six contributions above and beyond the quota, the student will have earned an 80%. If that same student has a deficit of six points below the quota, the student will have earned a 74%.
4. *Negative Participation*: The following behavior is prohibited in the classroom: sleeping, use of electronic devices, offensive language, remarks, and/or actions. Students who sleep or use electronic devices in class risk reduction of their final grade by 1/3 for each offense. Students who make offensive remarks and/or actions risk failure and expulsion from the course in line with the regulations set forth in the Student Code of Conduct.
5. *Quizzes*: There will be a series of six short quizzes at the start of designated class sessions throughout the course of this semester. These will be evaluated in terms

of percentile and translated to a letter grade based on the grading chart below. The total quiz average will count for 50% of the final grade.

6. *Interview Packages*: As noted above, students are required to plan, write, shoot, and edit a ten minute interview package. This will involve (1) choosing a newsworthy subject to interview (20%), (2) writing an appropriate interview script with narration (20%), (3) directing the interview (20%), (4) shooting B-roll (20%), and (5) editing the interview package together (20%). In total, the Interview Package is worth 50% of the final grade.

Grading Chart

A (93-100)	C (73-76)
A- (90-92)	C- (70-72)
B+ (87-89)	D+ (67-69)
B (83-86)	D (63-66)
B- (80-82)	D- (60-62)
C+ (77-79)	F (below 60)

Course Calendar

Week 1 (1/19)

❖ Overview

- Fill out index cards.
- Personal introductions.
- Introduction and overview of the course.
- What is Broadcast Journalism?
- Listen to Edward R. Murrow radio broadcasts.

❖ Assignment

- Purchase books.
- Read Chapters 1 from *How to Watch TV News*.
- Read Chapter 9 *Broadcast News*.
- Watch *CBS Evening News* for Friday 1/23.

Week 2 (1/26)

❖ Overview

- Discuss reading.
- Discuss viewing.
- Break.
- Finding your story.
- View portions of *This Reporter* (Part I).

❖ Assignment

- Read Chapter 2 from *How to Watch TV News*.
- Read Chapters 16 & 17 *Broadcast News*.

- Watch *NBC Nightly News* for Friday 1/30.

Week 3 (2/2)

❖ Overview

- **Quiz 1**
- Discuss reading.
- Discuss viewing.
- Break.
- Researching your story.
- View portions of *This Reporter* (Part II).

❖ Assignment

- **Prepare a treatment for your Interview Package.**
- Read Chapter 3 from *How to Watch TV News*.
- Read Chapter 1 *Broadcast News*.
- Watch *ABC World News* for Friday 2/6.

Week 4 (2/9)

❖ Overview

- **Interview Package Treatment Due.**
- Discuss reading.
- Discuss viewing.
- Break.
- Writing your story, Part 1.
- View portions of *See It Now* (Part I).

❖ Assignment

- Read Chapter 4 from *How to Watch TV News*.
- Read Chapters 2 & 3 *Broadcast News*.
- Watch *Campbell Brown* for Friday 2/13.

Week 5 (2/16)

❖ Overview

- Discuss reading.
- Discuss viewing.
- Break.
- Writing your story, Part 2.
- View portions of *See It Now* (Part II).

❖ Assignment

- Read Chapter 5 from *How to Watch TV News*.
- Read Chapters 4 & 5 *Broadcast News*.
- Watch *Glenn Beck* for Friday 2/20.

Week 6 (2/23)

❖ Overview

- Discuss reading.
- Discuss viewing.
- Break.
- Writing your story, Part 3.
- View *The McCarthy Years* (Part I).

❖ Assignment

- Read Chapter 6 from *How to Watch TV News*.
- Read Chapter 7 *Broadcast News*.
- Watch *Olbermann* for Friday 2/27.

Week 7 (3/2)

❖ Overview

- **Quiz 2**
- Discuss reading.
- Discuss viewing.
- Break.
- Writing Your Story, Part 5.
- View *The McCarthy Years* (Part II).

❖ Assignment

- **Prepare a script for your Interview Package.**
- Read Chapters 15 & 24 *Broadcast News*.
- If applicable to your project, read Chapters 12 & 13 *Broadcast News*.

Week 8 (3/9)

❖ Overview

- **Script Due.**
- **Quiz 3**
- Discuss reading.
- Break.
- Discuss Interview Package scripts.
- Production seminar.

❖ Assignment

- **Begin shooting Interview Packages.**
- Read Chapter 7 from *How to Watch TV News*.
- *Frontline* (PBS) (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/>)

Week 9 (3/16) Spring Break.

Week 10 (3/23)

❖ Overview

- Discuss reading.
- View *Harvest of Shame*.
- Discuss *Frontline* and *Harvest of Shame*.
- Break.
- View Dailies.
- ❖ **Assignment**
 - Read Chapter 8 *How to Watch TV News*.
 - Read Chapter 14 *Broadcast Journalism*.
 - 20/20 (ABC) (<http://abcnews.go.com/2020>)

Week 11 (3/30)

- ❖ **Overview**
 - **Quiz 4**
 - Discuss reading.
 - Discuss viewing.
 - Break.
 - View Dailies.
 - Editing seminar
- ❖ **Assignment**
 - Read Chapter 9 *How to Watch TV News*.
 - *Dateline* (NBC) (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3032600/>)

Week 12 (4/6)

TBA

Week 13 (4/13)

- ❖ **Overview**
 - Discuss reading.
 - Discuss viewing.
 - Break.
 - View Rough Cuts.
- ❖ **Assignment**
 - Read Chapter 10 *How to Watch TV News*.
 - *48 Hours* (CBS) (<http://www.cbsnews.com/sections/48hours/main3410.shtml>)

Week 14 (4/20)

- ❖ **Overview**
 - Discuss reading.
 - Discuss viewing.
 - Break.
 - View Rough Cuts.

❖ **Assignment**

- Read Chapters 11, 12 & 13 *How to Watch TV News*.
- *60 Minutes* (CBS)
(<http://www.cbsnews.com/sections/60minutes/main3415.shtml>)

Week 15 (4/27)

❖ **Overview**

- **Quiz 5**
- Discuss reading.
- Discuss viewing.
- Break.
- View Rough Cuts.

❖ **Assignment**

- Read Chapters 20 & 21 *Broadcast News*.

Week 16 (5/4)

❖ **Overview**

- **Quiz 6**
- **Final Projects Due.**
- Discuss reading.

❖ **Assignment**

- No Assignment.

Final Exam Week (5/10–5/13)

❖ **Overview**

- **View Final Projects.**
- Discuss final grades.